

Consumer e-News

REGULATORY COMMISSION OF ALASKA

FALL 2020

How Capital Credits Work



- Your electric co-op tracks how much electricity you use and pay throughout the year.
- At the end of the year, the co-op assesses its finances to see if there are excess revenues after all operating expenses are paid.
- Co-op allocates the excess revenues as “capital credits” to its members.
- If financial conditions allow, the co-op’s board of directors will pay out the capital credits to its members.
- The co-op will notify you when and how you will receive your capital credits.

Although the RCA regulates the rates and services of most electric co-ops in Alaska, the RCA does not have jurisdiction and oversight on capital credits. We recommend that you review your co-op’s by-laws to understand specific rules and regulations governing capital credits.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Many filings before the RCA are subject to rigorous statutory deadlines. This means work must get done and must be done accurately and on time.

Since mid-March when the COVID-19 pandemic began, like many Alaskans, many of the RCA employees transitioned to a work-from-home structure with little disruption to our normal business operations. Staff continued to meet virtually for docket status updates and to tackle the myriad of utility and pipeline filings and assist with issuing commission orders.

Whit Garey

We are proud of the RCA’s teamwork, as everyone handled the transition admirably. We would like to especially recognize Whit Garey, RCA’s Law Office Assistant II. Whit has been in this position for a little over a year now and has learned his position quickly. Over the past several months, he has been the only one in the Commission Section and has taken on all the workload. He recently hired another law office assistant to his team and has been training the new employee along with all his other duties. Whit has adapted quickly and works to achieve a high-quality work product. He has been a tremendous asset to the RCA during this period of uncertainty.

Keeping Residential Energy Bills Low During the COVID-19 Pandemic

With more Alaskans staying at home for extended periods of time because of the coronavirus outbreak, households may see an increase in their energy usage that may cause monthly bills to spike. And with reduced income for so many, it makes it even more imperative to cut back on energy usage. Here are some easy ways to save energy while working from home and caring for your family.

- Use your computer's sleep mode or power management features. If your computer won't be in use for more than two hours, the U.S. Department of Energy ([energy.gov](https://www.energy.gov)) recommends turning it off.
- Upgrade your lighting to ENERGY STAR certified LED bulbs, which use 70-90% less energy than standard bulbs. Turn off the lights when you leave the room.
- Check for cracks, leaks, and drafts. Gales that blow under doors may be the most obvious, but also check places where different materials meet, like between the foundation and the walls, the walls and the window frames, room corners, dryer vents, and penetrations where utilities -- including the TV and telephone cables -- pass through. Use appropriate [weatherstripping](#) or [caulking](#) to seal air leaks. This will prevent excess heat from escaping and could keep your heater from running up your energy bill.
- Replace air filter to help your HVAC system run efficiently and improve indoor air quality. Your air filter is the access point for your furnace system's airflow, and it filters your home from allergens and dirt particles. If you don't replace the air filter, it clogs up from excess dust, reduces airflow, and increases resistance which puts strain on your heating system.
- Cozy up with a sweater and blanket, instead of turning up the thermostat or using space heaters.
- Ditch the TV and pick up a book. It's no secret, televisions and video games can run up your electric bills especially when used all day. Instead, encourage your kids to pick up a book, do arts and crafts, or enjoy outdoor activities.



For more energy-saving tips, visit the U.S. Department of Energy [website](#). For consumer assistance in paying utility bills, contact the [Alaska 2-1-1](#).

FISCAL YEAR 2020 CONSUMER COMPLAINTS

The RCA Consumer Protection & Information Section (CP) wrapped up fiscal year 2020 with a total of 176 informal complaints filed by utility customers across Alaska.

CP is responsible for assisting consumers in answering questions and resolving disputes with their utility companies.

CP receives complaints via phone calls, letters, and electronic submissions (email/complaint portal). CP keeps records of informal complaints received, and the data below represents the number of Fiscal Year 2020 complaints related to electric, natural gas, refuse (garbage collection), water and sewer, and telecom services (inmate calling services or ICS, local and intrastate long distance services, and non-regulated services such as broadband internet, cable, and wireless).

Utility Services	No. of Complaints
Electric	62
Natural Gas	13
Telecom - LEC/IXC	35
Telecom - ICS	3
Cable, Internet, Wireless	42
Refuse (Garbage Collection)	10
Water & Sewer	11
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If you are unable to resolve your dispute with a utility company, CP is here to help. Contact us (907) 276-6222, toll-free at 1-800-390-2782 (outside Anchorage), or via email cp.mail@alaska.gov.

CP's Site Tour of Golden Valley Electric Co.
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